

(19) World Intellectual Property
Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
17 February 2005 (17.02.2005)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 2005/015310 A2

(51) International Patent Classification⁷: **G03F 7/00**

(21) International Application Number:
PCT/EP2004/007926

(22) International Filing Date: 15 July 2004 (15.07.2004)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
60/487,709 16 July 2003 (16.07.2003) US
60/487,708 16 July 2003 (16.07.2003) US
60/548,123 26 February 2004 (26.02.2004) US

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(81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NA, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.

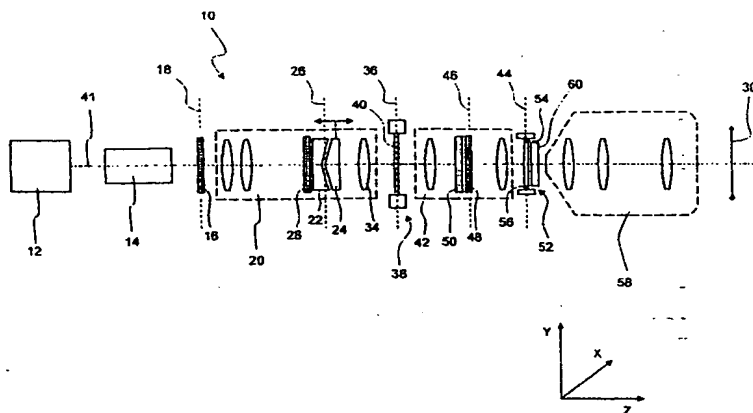
(84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, NA, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:

— without international search report and to be republished upon receipt of that report

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

(54) Title: **ILLUMINATION SYSTEM FOR A MICROLITHOGRAPHIC PROJECTION EXPOSURE APPARATUS**



(57) Abstract: An illumination system for a microlithographic projection exposure apparatus includes a light source (12) for generating a projection light beam, a first objective (20) and a masking system (38, 52) for masking a reticle (30). The masking system (38, 52) includes adjustable first blades (40) for masking in a first spatial direction (X) and adjustable second blades (54, 56) for masking in a second spatial direction (Y). The first blades (40) are arranged in the region of a first field plane (36) and the second blades (54, 56) are arranged in the region of the second field plane (44) which are different to the first field plane (36). The masking system can therefore be made spatially less concentrated, whereby constructional difficulties in the region of the field plane before the masking objective resulting from space requirement problems are reduced. A further contribution is made to solving the space requirement problem if an attenuation system for achieving the most uniform possible light intensity in the wafer plane (122) includes a transmission filter (162) which has locally varying transmissivity and can be moved synchronously with traversing movements of the reticle (30).

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PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 2005/015310 A3

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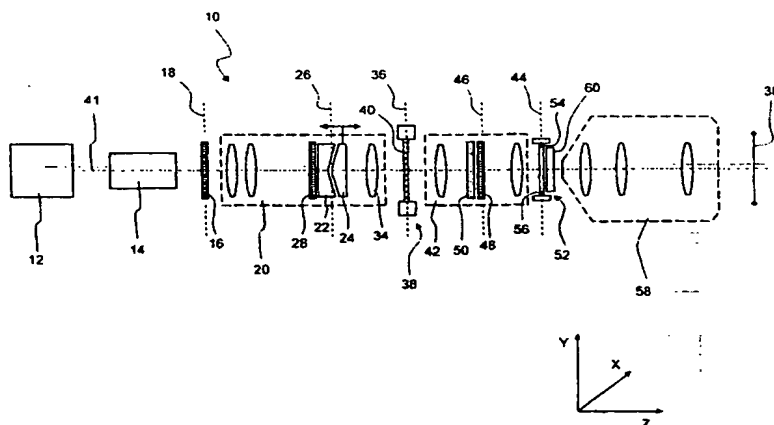
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Published:

- with international search report
- before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of receipt of amendments

[Continued on next page]

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(88) Date of publication of the international search report:
28 July 2005

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